

FINAL REPORT

19980012

**DEVELOPMENT AND MARKET TESTING OF VALUE ADDED
PRODUCTS FOR BISON MEAT**

February 2004

Funded by the Agri-Food Innovation Fund

Prepared by: Saskatchewan Bison Association



FINAL REPORT
TO THE
AGRI-FOOD INNOVATION FUND

PROJECT 98000012
DEVELOPMENT AND MARKET TESTING OF VALUE ADDED PRODUCTS
FOR BISON

SUBMITTED BY THE SASKATCHEWAN BISON ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY, 2004

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Saskatchewan Bison Association wishes to acknowledge the funding support of the Agri-Food Innovation Fund (AFIF), which made this project possible. The Association wishes to extend appreciation to AFIF officials for their counsel and co-operation throughout the project.

The Association also wishes to acknowledge the important roles played by the project partners, which were integral to the success of the project. This includes Dr. Jill Hobbs and staff of the Specialized Livestock Marketing Research Group (SLMRG), Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Saskatchewan; Dr. Jag Dhanda and Paul Rogers and staff of the Specialty Livestock Value-Added Program (SLVAP), Department of Applied Microbiology and Food Science, University of Saskatchewan; Dan Prefontaine and staff of the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Center; and Peter Wilkins of Peter Wilkins and Associates. Their counsel, co-operation, and efforts were vital to the success of the project.

The role played by commercial entities in the retail trials of the products is acknowledged and thanked, as this phase was integral to the successful completion of the project. This includes the Hungarian Club and La Bodega Restaurants in Regina; Federated Co-operatives Ltd. and their Quance Street Marketplace in Regina as well as all three Saskatoon stores; Saslove's Meat Market in Ottawa and Pusaterie's in Toronto.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Agri-Food Innovation Fund initially approved funding for this project to enable the Saskatchewan Bison Association to investigate, develop, and market test new bison products. While the project began as a fully independent project, it has been aligned and integrated with AFIF 20010170, Development and Market Testing of Value Added Products for Bison Meat Extension. This alignment and integration was possible because both projects were based on the following objectives:

- To analyze the consumer demand for bison in key strategic Canadian markets focusing on lower-value bison cuts and utilizing qualitative and quantitative consumer research.
- To develop value-added products for the initial trial and to continue value added product development in follow-up to the consumer preference trials and experimental auctions.
- To conduct retail market trials to explore the product and market potential with retailers and consumers.
- To develop long-term marketing and supply chain strategies for these products and bison overall.

AFIF 98000012 was used for early product developed and then for development of the bison garlic sausage. With the limited funding within AFIF 98000012, the advantage in alignment and integration of this project with AFIF 20010170 was that the bison garlic sausage could be included in the consumer tests and retail trials which are of critical importance to such value added product development. The following are key activities funded by AFIF 98000012 and conducted in conjunction with AFIF 20010170:

- Development of a bison burger, kebab, stew, and deli roast and testing with 459 consumers at Vancouver, Leduc/Edmonton, Saskatoon, Guelph, and Quebec City in 2001/2002.
- Development of a bison garlic sausage and three flavours of marinated bison strips for testing with consumers at Canadian Western Agribition in 2002 and consumers in Guelph and Quebec City in early 2003.
- Successful completion of retail trials in two Regina restaurants and six retail food stores in Regina, Saskatoon, Ottawa, and Toronto from July to December 0f 2003. The bison garlic sausage was sampled to over 14,000 people at Canadian Western Agribition 2003.
- Development of key learnings and recommendations for long-term marketing and value chain strategies.

This report will be restricted to this Executive Summary. A comprehensive final report has been submitted for AFIF 20010170. It contains summaries of Project Activities and Achievements, Key Learnings and Recommendations, and Indications for Further Development for the integrated project as well as supporting reports from the Specialized Livestock Marketing Research Group and the project consultant. The final report for the integrated project contains valuable information that can assist producers and industry stakeholders in product development and developing marketing strategies. Readers are invited to refer to the final report for AFIF 20010170 for full details.

AFIF 19980012 and AFIF 20010170 have been successful in completing the steps from initial product development to commercialization in the marketplace.

